

MEMO

Date: September 1, 2015

To: Bay Trail Steering Committee

From: Laura Thompson

Subject: Bay Trail Smartphone Audio Tour Partnership

The Bay Trail Project, in partnership with Canogle and Convergence Media, recently created four smartphone audio tours that highlight historic points of interest and offer curated short stories about the environment and landscapes along the trail. Tours were created in four locations: Hamilton Field in Novato, American Canyon along the Napa River, Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front Historic National Park in Richmond, and the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project in Alviso. These tours were made possible through a \$50,000 Coastal Conservancy “Explore the Coast” grant.

Since the release of the tours in 2014, Bay Trail staff has been working with the Canogle team to publicize the tours through newspaper and magazine articles, guided hikes along the tour routes, MeetUp gatherings at each tour location, Facebook postings and promotions at conferences.

Earlier this year, the Canogle/Bay Trail tours were recognized by California State Parks as the recipient of the 2015 California Trails & Greenways Social Media & Technology Award announced at the state trail conference in April. These tours are groundbreaking in their ability to provide placed-based information in a well-designed and easy-to-use format, with the familiar voice of Doug McConnell guiding the way.

Potential for New Tours under a New Financing Structure

With the success of these tours, Bay Trail staff and Canogle/Convergence Media are working to explore opportunities for new tours while maintaining the tours as a free downloads. The San Francisco waterfront presents itself as an exciting opportunity to showcase a spectacular shoreline, visited by millions of people from around the world, along the entire section of Bay Trail between the Golden Gate Bridge and AT&T Park. We have good working relationships with many of the agencies and organizations located along this section of Bay Trail that may have an interest in showcasing their work through a Bay Trail audio tour.

Without a dedicated funding source for this work, the Canogle team has explored other options for financing the production of new tours. The model Canogle wants to pursue is a structure

that involves selling sponsorships, at different levels, to potential partners (i.e. Port of San Francisco, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, the Exploratorium, or the Giants) for inclusion of content in Bay Trail mobile tours. The interested partner would pay a certain amount to Canogle in exchange for inclusion of content about the partner's work as part of the tour script that would reach a wide audience. Canogle has been working closely with the Bay Trail Project to identify the shoreline partners whose stories we think add value to the Bay Trail experience. This placed-based content sponsorship model was created as an alternative to the annoying pop-up ads and other distracting methods that are used in other smart phone applications.

Structure of Bay Trail Engagement with Canogle

Before we move forward with new tours, staff wants to check with the Steering Committee to gauge the comfort level for this type of arrangement. There are two topics of discussion that I have provided questions for the Committee to consider.

1) The Canogle Platform

The public gets the Bay Trail audio tours by downloading "Point" by Canogle to their mobile device.

Pro: Downloading "Point" enables the public to see all the tours that Canogle has created (and will create). The location-based program shows other trail audio tours, including Bay Trail tours, near where the person is located when searching the app.

Con: There is the potential for brand confusion when the hiker downloads "Point" rather than "Bay Trail" and the public may have an expectation that as a public project we would provide apps directly rather than through a private firm.

2) Sponsorship Structure

Canogle has worked with Bay Trail staff every step of the way to develop a new business model for producing new tours in absence of a grant. They do not want to proceed on a Bay Trail tour without our involvement and approval. The sponsorship model requires that a trail partner pay for inclusion of content (not pop-up ads) related to their organization, in exchange for exposure of their work to new audiences through the Bay Trail audio tour.

Pro: This creative approach finances the production of the audio tour without the need for pop-up ads. Instead, the paid content is embedded in the audio voiceover and is relevant to the location of the walk.

Con: The paid sponsorship model can potentially put Bay Trail staff in the position of having to "sell" participation in the tours to our trail partners. Securing a technical grant to finance the tours rather than the paid sponsorship model would eliminate this issue.